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North of the square stands the church, a substantial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[13] it was one of the first districts where the Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" *vodun* drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

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European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

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534 782 778 The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then [788] lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

534 The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the *manman* peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

534 778 788 The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the baptism. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they [292] appear in public, and *rades*, apron-like garments, a white bro-

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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola, clairin,* and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day —a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonnelle* had been built for the accompanying dance.

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt' savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt' savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum-

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the falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

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In certain communities there
is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopié band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *mait'* Rara, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the mait' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the mait' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwadi, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The mait' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food.

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house.

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwadi dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture.

The roi Lwalwadi is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from rois of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet

[1] [Aubin, En Haiti, p. 42. Cf. p. 351, category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwadi and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jone*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[2] [Footnote appears in category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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71. Rara at Léogane. Behind the dancing majours jones a member of the group holds their banner, which depicts a bird catching a lizard. The costumes are traditional and are believed to date from colonial days.

2: Courlander, B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
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72. *A roi Lavalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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73. *Rara stick dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

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74. *Chaluska dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

75. *Maypole dancers. Musicians are sitting next to the pole.*

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[184] [171] *76. A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
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36. Possessed by the lua Gédé Nimbo, two women dance the deity's favorite step, the Banda.